

TRAUMA SUPPORT FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

Self-care information for families and loved ones

Looking after your mental health

It can be difficult to see someone you care about struggle with the distress caused by trauma, grief or loss.

You may worry about their wellbeing and feel helpless to help them. It can be particularly difficult if they are in a care facility and you only see them sometimes or you can't visit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you are helping someone who has been through a trauma, it's important to look after your own health, make time for yourself, and balance the person's needs with your own.

Helping yourself so you can help them

Looking after yourself may be the most important way you can help the person you care for. Here are some simple ways to do this:



Make time for yourself

Get plenty of rest, eat well and exercise regularly. Consider respite care so you can have a break.



Spend time with others

Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling or do an activity together, like going for a walk.



Ask for help and try to share the load

Ask others to visit the person you care for or give them a call. Ask for help with simple things like filling in forms.



Avoid drinking or smoking too much



Do something you enjoy

Having fun and doing something you love recharges your batteries and reduces stress.



Make time for relaxation

Breathing techniques or meditation help with stress and worry. Try a relaxation app - many are free to download.

When to seek help: If you are feeling stressed and finding it hard to cope, talk to your doctor about getting counselling and professional help.

Useful resources

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement: 1800 22 22 00

Carer Gateway: www.carergateway.gov.au

Carers Australia: www.carersaustralia.com.au

Dementia Support Australia: 1800 699 799

Older Person's Advocacy Network: www.opan.com.au

Respite Care: www.myagedcare.gov.au/short-term-care/respice-care